
*
* GILDED GOSPEL *
* BY *
* JOHNNIE SPEER *
*

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CHARACTERS

REVEREND JONES.....	CHARACTER
DEACON TUTTLE.....	CHARACTER HEAVY
ARABELLA BUTES.....	CHARACTER
TOBY.....	COMEDY
BRUCE.....	LEAD
MARY.....	LEAD

TABLE
CHAIRS
BIBLE OR BOOK LIKE IT
STORM EFFECTS
TWO BASKETS OF EGGS
GUN TO SHOOT IN BARELL
APPLES
SNAKE
BABY
MILK BOTTLE WITH NIPPLE AND FILLED WITH MILK

	WINDON		
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*			*
*		CHAIR	*
			*
*			
*	TABLE	CHAIR	CHAIR
*			*
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*			*

Rev

But, Deacon, as long as he stays under my roof, I can watch him and guide him in the path of righteousness.

Deacon

Suit yourself, but it don't approve with none of the church folk, and so there. And furthermore if he can't put on a good suit when he comes to church on Sunday, let him stay out.

Toby

Good suit! What do you call this? (comedy suit)

Deacon

Why its filthy. Don't you know that suit has an odor of pungeance.

Toby

That aint all its got, look at them flaps on the pockets.

Deacon

Aw! He's plain ignorant. Let him go to school and get an education

Rev

I'm teaching him as much as I can.

Toby

I'll bet I know more now than old fuzzy face does.

Deacon

Know more than I! And me a graduate of Harvard.

Toby

Shucks, I went through that college.

Rev

Why Toby, you never went through Harvard, did you?

Toby

Yes, I did. I went in the front door, and got kicked out the back door.

Deacon

Bah! Where's Bruce, Reverend?

Rev

He's just outside in the garden with my daughter. Do you want to see him

Deacon

Yes. I'd just as well talk to him, now that I'm here.

Arabella

(enters R) Where is that young scamp? Oh there you are (to Toby)

Toby

Oh heres old pathe news.

Arabella

You young flit you. How dare you sneek in my house and put hop toads in my bed.

Rev

Toby, did you do that?

Toby

Well, I---

Rev

Toby, don't lie.

Toby

Yes sir, I did.

Rev

Why did you do that?

Toby

Cause she makes me sick. That aint all I done; I put a gasser snake in her shoe.

Arabella

Oh, I'm going to have you arrested for that.

Toby

Shucks, you aint got no sense of humor a t tall.

GILDED GOSPEL

(THE Scene is the interior of Reverend Jones's parsonage in the sitting room. A comfortably fixed but none to elaborate home The sunshine of a bright warm summer's day is shining happily through the windows) (noise off R)

Deacon Tuttle

(enters with Toby by the ear) Come right in here, you young imp of satan!

Toby

(fighting) Hey, dadburn you, you old tin horn gospel gapper you Let go of my ear.

Reverend Jones

(enters L) Here, here, whats the meaning of this? Whats the matter, Deacon Tuttle.

Deacon

Matter enough. This young tramp you've picked up is going to jail, Reverend Jones.

Rev

And what did he do?

Deacon

He's been into my apple orchard again. This is the third time he's been in it.

Toby

That's a lie. It aint the third time.

Rev

What is it?

Toby

Its the fourth he didn't see me once.

Deacon

Well Arabella happened to see you this time.

Toby

Durn that old hen, she' sees more than the Pathe news.

Rev

Toby, don't you know its wrong to steal?

Toby

I wasn't stealing. I just climbed over the fence and took the apples thats all.

Rev

You shouldn't do it.

Deacon

Well its going to stop, I'll tell you that right now. Reverend Jones, the congregation don't approve of you supporting this here fellow. He's a stranger of doubtful character---came in here on a box car.

Toby

Twern't neither---it was a cattle train.

Deacon

You aren't going to be allowed to stay in this town.

Toby

I can if I want to.

Rev

Lets not quarrell. Deacon, I'm sorry if Toby has misbehaved. I'm sure, he won't take any more of your apples, will you Toby?

Toby

Naw, his old apples taste like ~~xxx~~ he looks.

Deacon

How's that?

Toby

Sour, and full of worms.

Deacon

I'm warning you Reverend, you hadn't ought to let him stay here.

Arabella

It looks to me like a minister of the gospel would surely abstain from such indiffident, poorly annalyzed exhibits of the lower development of mankind.

Toby

(laughs) Did you hear that? Gosh, Miss Butts, where did you get such big words anyway?

Arabella

Why out of my head of course.

Toby

I'd hate to have 'em in my stommich!

Arabella

(looks out window) There's Bruce out there now. Reverend, we 're going to make your ~~son~~ a very proud ~~young~~ man before long.

Rev

Is that so?

Arabella

Yes, you'll find out after the trustees of the church meet tonight.

Deacon

Don't say anything just now, Arabella.

Arabella

No, I shan't, you know me Deacon, I'm a woman of few words.

Toby

Yeh, but you sure do use those ~~word~~ few words a lot. You knowmmore about everybody's business than the news papers. Pathe News thats what I'm going to call you.

Arabella

Why, Pathe, news. Thats a news reel in the pictures.

Toby

I know, and it stands for you. (points to her) Pathe News! Sees all, Knows all, and Tells all!

Arabella

Oh you, heathen! Anybody that plays with snakes and toads is not right. Don't you know that those toads will make warts on your fingers. Wherever a toad touches you, you will have warts.

Toby

Oh boy, and I put 'em in her bed!

Rev

Toby, you'd better leave the room.

Arabella

Yes, make him go. I have something to tell you. Now of course I don't believe its so, but then---

Toby

Heck, I aint gonna leave now, I want to hear the scandal.

Arabella

I'll have you to understand that I don't carry scandals, sir.

Bruce

(enters)

Deacon

Oh here's Bruce now.

Arabella

My, what a fine looking young man you are, Bruce. I wish you were my son.

Toby

(looking at her) Gosh, I'd hate to have you for a mama.

Arabella

If you were my son, I'd poison you.

Toby

Yeh, and if you were my ma I'd take it.

Deacon

I want to talk to you, Bruce.

Bruce

Very well, Deacon. Father, I'm going to tear down a part of the garden wall.

Rev

Tear it down? Why Bruce.

Bruce

I don't like it. Its too old and crusty looking. I'll put up a new one thats more artistic. Thats what an archetiedt syt/d/d/ should do----tear down the old, and build new.

Rev

That old wall was out there when I first came to this town thirty years ago, Bruce.

Bruce

Yes, and so was this house, and the church you preach in. They were here thirty years ago,,and you think that they should stay forever.

Rev

Boy, that old church and this parsonage is just as strong as it ever was.

Deacon

But its so old and rough looking. This town is growning and we should have a new church, and a new parsonage.

Arabella

Deacon, you said not to talk about that yet.

Deacon

Thats right.

Toby

No, Deacon you let a Pathe News do the talking.

Arabella

Toby, I'm going to smack your sassy face!

Toby

Smack it. ~~that~~ A smack means a kiss, and you aint gonna kiss me. I got a weak stomach.

Arabella

Did you hear the latest? Of course now I don't know whetehr its so or not, but I heard it. You know that Mary Porter that works for Judd Grey, the banker.

Toby

Gee, she's the prettiest girl in town.

Arabella

And her beauty has cost her the honor and respect of the community. She'll have to be thrown out of the church.

Rev

Why?

Arabella

She has a baby and refuses to give the name of the father.

Bruce

(turns away worried)

Rev

What! Miss Butts, are you sure?

Arabella

Well thats what I heard, and if its so we don't want any such trash in our church.

Deacon

I should say not; we're going to try and weed out all of the tramps and ill kept people who come to our church and smell up the pews. (looks at Toby)

Toby

Don't look at me; I had a bath two months ago when I came here.

Rev

Well you surely aren't going to throw the poor girl out of church

~~That is when she needs our ass~~

This is the hour of her need.

Deacon

Such tramps as she should be run out of town. Old Judd fired her, the minute he heard it

Rev

But what will the poor girl do?

Arabella

That is not our worry. She can't belong to our church and teach Sunday School either.

Toby

Aw, gosh, she's the best Sunday School teacher that ever was.

Arabella

A Sunday School Teacher should have culture refinement, and an education.

Toby

I suppose you think you're qualified. Who could go to Sunday School and think about the Lord with an old devil like you in front of him.

Arabella

Oh I won't stand for that.

Toby

Well sit down then. (looks out window) Oh look, theres Mary Porter now.

Rev

What is she doing?

Toby

Gosh, she's got a bundle in her arms.

Arabella

They're running her out of town. (noise of kids off stage jeering)

Deacon

She's got what she deserves.

Toby

Look at them kids makin' fun of her. That aint right.

Deacon

It is right, and theres my little ~~spp/Oswa~~ nephew Oswald out there at the head of the gang.

Toby

When I git through with him he'll be at the end of the gang. (goes to door) They aint gonna treat Mary like that.

Deacon

Toby, what are you going to do

Toby

I'm going to beat hell out of your little Oswald!

Arabella

Oh stop him!

(noise off stage)

Deacon

This is a disgrace.

Rev

They have no right to torment the girl.

Arabella

What, do you stand up for her. Agirl without character like that.

Deacon

Toby's going to regret it if he hits my nephew.

Toby

(enters carrying a baby bundle, and supporting Mary who falls in a chair) Come on in here, Reverend Jones won't turn you out.

Arabella

How dare you bring that girl in this house?

Toby

You kiss my foot!

Deacon

Did you hit my nephew.

Toby

Naw, I just pated him up side of the jaw, and knocked a fe wtetth out.

Deacon

I'll have you jailed.

Toby

He aint gonna hit no woman with a rock when I'm around. Gee, Parsons she's about all in. What the heck am I gonna do with this?

Arabella

Her baby! A squalling little brat without a father.

Toby

The heck it is. I'm gonna be its papa!

Rev

(rubbing Mary's hands) Do you feel better, Mary.

Mary

Oh D----- (jumps up startled) My baby!

Toby

I got him. (gives him to her) He's all right.

Rev

Child, you had better lie down and get some rest. Your nerves are all unstrung.

Mary

No I've got to go. The whole town is laughing at me----even the my/children that I loved and taught. They told me to leave and I'll go.

Rev

No, you're not going until you have had assistance.

Arabella

You mean, you are going to take that girl under your roof?

Rev

Yes.

Deacon

You can't do it. The church will cast the both of you out. Such a disgrace! You have forgotten, Regerend Jones, that this a parsonage, and not a gathering place for tramps.

Rev

I haven't forgotten that I am in the service of God, and no matter whether they be rich or poor, they are His Children, and who are we to cast punishment upon our own folk.

Bruce

But father, you can't let a girl like that stay here.

Mary

(gives Bruce a long look) No----I'll go.

Bruce

(turns shame faced away)

Rev

Bruce, twenty two years ago you were left on my door step all wrapped in a little bundle. There was a note beside that little bundle and it read "Please care for my son, and bring him up in the pathway of God. I/~~and my wife and my son~~/ I took the little child that you were then and have raised you to man hood and success. I ask~~ed~~ no questions. Who knows but what the ~~my~~ ^{suffered} baby mother who laid that bundle on my doorstep might have in the same agony of regret and shame that this poor girl now bears?

Deacon

Bruce, came of a good family; he wasn't a tramp whateger he was

Rev

And how do you know?

Deacon

I don't but you can tell by his actions, look what a smart boy he is. The most successful architect for his age we ever heard of.

Arabella

Oh, this will be good to tell. I'm going right now down to down to Mrs Dudds. Landsakes, get out of my way, Toby (pushes him and exit)

Toby

Extra! Special Edition. Hear all about the big scandal. Don't buy a paper, ask Arabella.

Deacon

Reverend Jones, this will cost you your job I'm afraid.

Rev

My job, but not my manhood!

Bruce

If that girl stays here, I move.

Rev

Bruce---

Deacon

Come to my house, Bruce. I'd be proud to have you.

Bruce

Allright, Deacon. I shall. (they both exit)

Toby

Gee, what fine oil cans they are. Well it won't be long before everybody in town will know about it & from old Arabella (phone rings) There's the phone Hello. What yes she's here, and she's gonna stay here. No we didn't put it in the paper We just told Arabella (hangs up) Gosh, she's got the ladies aid told already.

Rev

Mary, you are welcome to stay here as long as I have a roof to protect you.

Mary

Thank you.

Toby

And we'll help you care for the kid. In fact I'll--I'll just be a mother to it.

Rev

Toby, you don't know how to raise babies. You've never had any experience have you.

Toby

No, but I raised a litter of pups once!

***** NUMBER *****

Toby

(enters carrying a baby bottle and hippie singing) "ye baby Bye, don't cry, you little monkey or I'll crown with a milk bottle. Gosh, I wonder if I can put this thing on. (bus of trying to put ~~nipple~~ ~~nipple~~ ~~nipple~~ ~~nipple~~ ~~nipple~~ on nipple on milk bottle) Durn if this aint the worst job I ever had. I think I'll bring in that old cow and give it to the baby, you don't have to put no nipple on her.

Arabella

(enters) Toby, what are you doing?

Toby

(turns around and spills milk) Aw, gosh now look what you done, oh Pathe News.

Arabella

Fixing the baby's bottle are you?

Zr

Toby

No I'm playing pin pong with an elephant.

Arabella

That girl is still here, I see.

Toby

Yes, and she's gonna stay here as long as she wants to.

Arabella

But what if Reverend Jones is asked to resigne

Toby

What do you mean?

Arabella

I mean that the trustees are going to build a new church, a great big church on the Main Street, and we are going to tear down that little brown church down there in falley.

Toby

Huh, tear it down. Well can't Reverend Jones preach in the new church any wya?

Arabella

No, he's got to funny old fashioned ideas for a modern thriving church like ours is going to be.

Toby

He's the best preacher that ever told a sinner to go to hell.

Arabella

Toby, how dare you swear in front of a lady.

Toby

Gosh, you're nice aint you. If I was a s good as you think you are, I'd grow wings, and fly.

Mary

(enters R),Toby, wheres is Reverend Jones.

Toby

He went out ot see some poor folks.

Mary

Er---how do you do, Miss Butts.

Arabella

Don't speak to me, you shameless woman.

Toby

Look at her put that nose of hers up in the air. I'd like to paste her one in the jaw.

Mary

We must forgive such thoughtless, Toby. I've made some candy, would like some? (exit)

Toby

Yeh, I'll say I would. What some, old Pathe News?

Arabella

I never indulge in sweets of any form, young boy.

Toby

(giveher apple) Well have a crab apple then. (exit ~~with Mary~~)

Deacon

(enters) Well, Arabella youhere already Is the Reverend IN?

Arabella

No, he's out ~~confess~~ visiting some more trash. Thank heaven we won't have to put up with him and his tramps very much longer.

Deacon

No, just as soon as that new church is built, we are going to do wwy with all thebgggars we've had before.

Arabella

And aren't the plans Bruce drew up wonderful. The church will be the most gorgeous for miles around. I'm so proud of the boy.

Deacon

He's a mighty fine lad. Too bad we can't get any line on who his parents were.

Arabella

I wish he had been left on your doorstep, Deacon.

Deacon

Now, Arabella, how could I have raised the lad. I don't know a thing about children. Of course if I---had ---er well a sweet little woman like you for a wife.

Arabella

Now, Deacon, don't become too flattering. You know I can resist you. (bus)

Deacon

Arabella, I don't want you to resist me. Why can't we get married?

Arabella

Oh we're so---well just think Deacon, I'm nearly forty five, and you---

Deacon

I'm forty eight.

Arabella

We're just too old to get married. Everybody would laugh at us.

Toby

(enters unnoticed)

Deacon

No, they wouldn't.

Arabella

Yes, they would. I don't want any one to know about our little affairs. We'll keep them to ourselves. Deacon, you may kiss me if you want to

Deacon

Arabella, My Arabella! (they kiss)

Toby

Hold her Newt, she's headed for the cabbage can!

Arabella

Toby, did you see?

Toby

No, I shut my eyes.

Deacon

Don't you dare tell.

Toby

What ~~me~~ tell anything. Oh my goodness I'm a woman of few words. (mocks Arabella) Of course now I don't believe its, so, I just heard, that is, I wouldn't repeat anything for the world but I ~~saw~~ you two slobbering kisses. Oh Boy, hot darn, gee whiz, whisker soup, wiat until I tell this. (starts to door yelling) Extra Edition paper. Deacon Tuttle Kissed Arabella Butts He kissed her on the settee.

Bruce

(enters) Toby, whats the matter with you?

Toby

I just caught Arabella and old Deacon Tuttle kissin'. And now I'm gonna tell it all over town. Watch my smoke! (exit calling) Extra! Read all about it. Extra!

Arabella

Oh that boy will be the death of me yet.

Deacon

Now, Bruce, you musn't believe what he says.

Bruce

I paid no attention to it, Deacon.

Deacon

What we want to do now is to break the news the Reverend.

Arabella

I suppose he'll take it to heart.

Bruce

Well, he has served his time as a minister. Why the old fellow is almost seventy years old.

Arabella

And his ideas of the gospel are older than that.

Deacon

Theres no culture or refinement to his preaching. I don't like to go to church and have the preacher talk about hell and look straight at me.

Bruce

I dare say, Reverend Jones would be very out of place in the new church I'm going to build. It is going to be the greatest work I ever created. I can see it now so clear in my mind's eye. The alter, black ebony encrusted with white mother of pearl. On each side of the pipe organ, three gilded candle sticks reaching to the top of the ceiling almost. The dome of the church gold gilt panels with paintings from the bible.

Arabella

Beautiful! Bruce, you're a genius.

Deacon

You'll make your mark in this world some day, Bruce.

Bruce

I'm not going to stop until I do. I'm going to be the greatest archetect that ever lived.

Deacon

When the new church is built we can tear down that ugly little brown church. It's bad sight; I don't like it so near my place. Spills the looks off my terrace.

Reverend Jones

(enters with hat on, smiles) How do you do, I was not aware that I had compnay.

Arabella

Yes, we have just come back from the meeting of the trustees.

Rev

Is that so?

Deacon

Got a little news to break to you.

Rev

I hope it is pleasant. (notice Bruce) How are you, my lad?

Bruce

All right, Reverend.

Rev

Reverend? Why Bruce in all the years that I raised you I never heard you call me that. Why you always said dad before.

Bruce

But you are not my father.

Rev

No----not your real father.

Arabella

We are going to build a new church.

Rev

A new church?

Deacon

Yes, Bruce is going to build it.

Rev

Bruce, will build a good one, I know.

Arabella

We are going to rush the construction, and have it completed by this time next year. We hope to open it on Easter Sunday.

Rev

A lovely time to open a church. I shall have a fitting service

for the occassion.

Deacon

Reverend Jones, you will have nothing to do with the new church.

Rev

Why---what do you mean?

Deacon

The church folk want a younger man in the pulpit. You've been preaching to us for thirty years. We're tired of it all, and besides we don't like your style of preaching.

Rev

(staring at him stunned) You mean---I don't preach any more.

Deacon

No, when the new church is finished, we are going to tear down the old one; also sell this place and build a beautiful parsonage next to the church. We are going to make the church ~~4/4/4/4/~~ ~~4/4/4/4/~~ a place of beauty.

Arabella

We hope, Reverend Jones, you will not take this hard. You should understand that you are too old ---besides we've given you a chance to improve on your ways. We've told you that we did not wish tramps and trash in our church, and still you insist upon bringing them there to sit beside us, and not only that you shelter an un Godly woman beneath your roof.

Deacon

Of course we'll give you a reasonable pension in recognition of your life long service.

Rev

A pension?

Bruce

Of course we don't expect you to starve to death.

Deacon

Well thats all we have to say. We'd better be going. We've got to tend to business, and building a church is business same as any other thing.

Arabella

Yes, lets look at the new plans Bruce has drawn up. Well good day Reverend. (they all start for the door)

Rev

(rising) Wait! Surely you're joking about taking my church away. You wouldn't turn down that little brown church, nor this parsonage. You couldn't destroy such sacred things.

Bruce

We've got to tear them down2 We want the land to build the new church on.

Rev

But have you the heart to do it? ~~Burce~~ in that little church I baptized you. Deacon, in that little church your mother was buried---I ~~pr~~~~ph~~~~ed~~ said the funeral oration. Arabella, your parents both died and were buried there. Have you people the heart to tear down that old church?

Arabella

Sentiment has little to do with this matter, Reverend.

Deacon

Why bring up things that are twenty years past. This is the future. Our town has become the wealthiest community for miles around. Silverdale is on a boom. Every one has money---we are a higher class of people.

Rev

Why---because you have money? Money doesn't make the teachings of God any higher than they already are. The gospel is

not bought with gold, it is given for service.

Arabella

We do not care to talk about it, Reverend. (they all three exit giving him a haughty expression)

Rev

(broken) My church! They don't want me. I'm too old. (sink on table) Oh God forgive them!

Mary

(enters L) Reverend. (goes to him her arms about him in a comforting way)

Toby

(enters) Gosh ding them gold toothed hypocrites! Gonna build a new church, and kick you out are they? Well, I pity the preacher they get. I'm gonna start savin' rotten eggs right now for Easter!

Rev

No, Toby, we must forgive them. They are blind with the wealth that God gave them. The glitter of gold is all they can see. They are trying to gild the gospel with their filthy wealth, and it cannot be done. It cannot be done. (starts for R)

Toby

Where you goin'?

Rev

To my study, Toby. I must give my best to them as long as the little brown church in the vale stands. (exits)

Toby

(looking at Mary) Gosh, what you crying for? Be a man.

Mary

Oh, Toby, how can people be so cruel so unseeing?

Toby

Cause they're trash, thats why. They called you and me tramps cause we aint got no education, nor money, but I'd rather be just plain ignorant like I am than to have the mite of education they have, and not know a damn thing! Well, I'll be back after while, Mary.

Mary

Where are you going, Toby?

Toby

Over to get some apples.

Mary

Not out of the Deacon's orchard, Toby.

Toby

Yeh, got to have 'em. You know an apple a day will keep the doctor away----but they aint never kept me from getting chased by the deacon. (exit)

Mary

Oh what shall I do? If I could only tell. I can't stand their sneers. I'm going to run away. But that wouldn't be right, I promised Reverend Jones I'd stay----he's been so kind.

Bruce

(enters, becomes uneasy at the sight of Mary) Er---pardon me I came back for my hat.

Mary

(handed it to him) Here it is, Bruce.

Bruce

(taking it and starting for the door) Thank you.

Mary

(going to him suddenly) Bruce, I can't stand it any longer.

Bruce

(annoyed) But you've got to. I can't marry you now. It would ruin my whole career.

Toby
(enters and overhears all of this scene)

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Mary
I know. I've tried to be brave. I shan't tell any one.

Bruce
I'll have plenty of money soon, Mary. When I finish this new church, I'll be as wealthy as Caeman. Then I'll send you and the kid away.

Mary
But, Bruce, won't you---

Bruce
I can't marry you of course not. That's foolish and impossible. I wish I'd never met you. (baby cry off stage) What's that? Your baby crying, isn't it.

Mary
(slowly) Our baby, Bruce!

Toby
(coming down) Well, I'll be a bad bug's teddy bear! Say if you're a man, I'm the King of Italy.

Mary
Toby, you heard?

Toby
You durn right I did.

Bruce
(taking him by throat) Don't you tell, or I'll kill you. (starts to exit)

Toby
(kick him in pants) You go to the devil.

Mary
Toby, you mustn't tell, never----

Toby
Why not?

Mary
Because he would be disgraced, his life ruined.

Toby
Aint he disgraced you?

Mary
I'll bear the blame for him----I-love-him----because I love him. (baby cries and she exits)

Toby
I'll be dadburned if I can figure it out. Gosh that forgivin stuff is allright, but I'd rather beat the soup out of 'em first. Well I know one thing when Easter Sunday comes if Reverend Jones don't preach the sermon, they're gonna have one grand time in that church, cuase I'm gonna bring the whole dog kennels and all the tramps I can find to the church, and I dare 'em to throw a one out.

Arabella
(enters boiling with rage) Toby, you told the whole town about the Deacon and I being in love.

Toby
You durn right I did.

Arabella
The Deacon is out getting a warrant for your arrest for slander. Also for stealing his apples. He saw you in his orchard again.

Toby
Aw, I wasn't in his old orchard.

Arabella
Don't lie. Heres the deacon with a warrant.

Deacon
(enters) Toby I've called the sheriff and you are going to jail for stealing my apples.

Toby

Awk I aint got none of your ole apples.

Arabella

Why look your pockets are just bulched with them already.

Toby

Them aint apples.

Arabella

What are they then?

Toby

You'd better not try to find out.

Arabella

Well I will find out. (goes to him) I'll search your pockets.

Toby

Better stay away now, I'm warning you.

Arabella

Don't warn me. (reaches hand in pocket and pulls out a snake screams and throws it to the Deacon) Snakes!

Deacon

(jumping up and down throws it to her, they throw it back and forth for comedy. Toby laughing all the time)

Arabella

(wrestles with it and it goes down her dress the neck of her dress) Help! Help! (jumps up and down and out door)

Deacon

Wait, Arabella. Don't let it bite you. (exit)

Toby

Gosh, I told dem not to search me. I hope it bites her on the alamagooselum! (exit)

***** NUMBER *****

(A YEAR HAS PASSED. THE NEW CHURCH IS BUILT. IT IS EASTER SUNDAY. CHIMES OF THE CHURCH BELL ARE HEARD OFF STAGE)

Rev

(enters. He seems some what older, and more pitiful. Goes to the door)

Mary

(enters dressed in neat clean dress but simple design. Has the Regerend's hat) Are you ready, Reverend.

Rev

You can hardly call me that now? The new church is built.

Mary

You will always be reverend to me and the poor people down by the railroad tracks.

Rev

God pity, them I don't know how they will ever get to go to church in the new one with all its fine pews, and furnishings.

Mary

They're afraid the gold might be tarnished by the prescence of those in rags.

Rev

Never the less we shall go, Mary. They have consented to at least allow their old preacher to sit through the service. What a beautiful day it is. Easter Sunday, and not a sign of rain.

Mary

Look at the people going by in their new Easter bonnets.

Rev

I wonder where Toby is?

Mary

Toby has been acting very mysterious and busy these last few days. I can't understand it. He keeps saying something about Easter eggs that were laid by a skink.

Toby
(enters with a basket of eggs) Gone to church yet?

Mary
No, what are you going to do with that basket?

Toby
Them's Easter eggs.

Rev
Where did you get them, Toby.

Toby
A skunk laid 'em. (holds one up to their nose) Smell!

Mary
(hold nose) Oh Toby, that's terrible.

Toby
This was a terrible skunk.

Rev
Well what are you going to do with them.

Toby
You'd be surprised.

Arabella
(enters all dressed up with a new bonnet)

Toby
Behold, the queen of Sheba!

Arabella
I thought I'd call and take you in my car, Reverend to the church.

Rev
That's very kind of you? Arabella, but Mary must go along.

Arabella
Then you shall have to walk.

Toby
Gosh, Mary don't want to ride in the lizzie of yours any way.
Its only a Willys Knight, and I know how much you paid for it.

Deacon
(enters with a basket of Easter eggs) Wonderful Easter, ain't it?
isn't it. Thought I'd drop by and see how you were, Reverend
before I went to church.

Arabella
Did you bring the Easter Eggs for the children, Deacon.

Deacon
Yes, here they are. (sits basket down)

Toby
Gosh, do you expect them kids to believe a rabbit laid them eggs?

Arabella
Certainly, the little children enjoy such things.

Toby
Can I come to your ole church?

Arabella
Certainly not. We don't want any trash there at all. And Mary.
I wouldn't advise you to go either.

Deacon
No, I should say not. This is Easter Sudnay and if you can't
dress up proper for the occassion stay away.

Toby
(takes Deacon's eggs and changes with his basket of eggs, and
exits)

Rev
If Mary can't go, I don't believe I care to go either.

Arabella
Very well, you can both stay away. I hardly think you're dressed
for the occassion any way, Reverend. You should see our new
preacher. He's young, handsome and dressed like a fashion plate.

Bruce

(enters) I've been looking for you two. Deacon, we want to get some more flowers for the church. I want the whole front alter decked with lillies.

Rev

But won't that cost a heavy sum?

Bruce

Money is no barrier in our church.

Rev

The church is beautiful, my boy. Only a genius could build it.

Bruce

Thank you.

Rev

Miss Butts, I wonder---that is if I dusted off my suit real well, if I could be admitted to sit down way in the back.

Arabella

Yes, but that girl can't come at all.

Mary

I'll brush your coat off, Reverend (they exit)

Deacon

Well, Bruce, you feel pretty proud of yourself now, don't you.

Bruce

The church is just as I seen it in my minds eye.

Arabella

I'm so proud of you, Bruce. How I wish you were my son.

Deacon

Well let us all go to service. It will be a pleasure to go to church now.

Arabella

Yes, it certainly will. (takes Bruce by the arm) Come, Bruce I want you to walk by me. I'll make folks look. (they exit)

Toby

(enters) Hot dog, wait until them kids eat them skunk eggs, they'll think theres Easter Egg rabbits. Well a lots to be done yet.

Mary

(enters) Toby, where are you going?

Toby

I'm going to church

Mary

Now Tob, you musn't start any trouble.

Toby

Oh I won't. I never do. (exit)

Mary

Poor Reverend Jones! (the bell of the church tolls)

Rev

(enters)

Mary

You'd better hurry if you're going, Reverend. Thats the last bell.

Rev

I'm not going. Mary, I can't. I thought when I got up this morning that I would smile and be gay, but even the sunshine seemed dull. How thoughtless they are. They don't seem to care for others at all. My clothes too old to go to church, I their minister who for all these have taught them the gospel that I know. The gospel that comes from god.

Mary

But their gospel is different.

Rev

Theirs is gilded with gold. Gilded Gospel! No M

Bruce

Then he placed tacks in every seat in the church.

Toby

Aint this the day of the resurrection, the day of arising.
I wanted to be sure that you all arisen.

Bruce

This means a jail sentence and a fine.

Toby

Fine!

Bruce

They'll give you thirty days or thirty dollars

Toby

I'd rather have the dollars, I can spend them.

Rev

Toby, you shouldn't have done that.

Toby

Well gosh, they aint got no business bein so high falutin'.
I told 'em if you didn't preach that sermon no one ever would,
and I stuck to my word.

Arabella

What did you do to the new preacher.

Toby

Took him down and ducked him in the spring.

Deacon

Is that all?

Toby

Nope, took his clothes away from him, and he's walkin ' around
with a rose bush for a cover.

Bruce

(to Rev) Now you see what kind of people you keep beneath your
roof.

Toby

You're the only thing he ought to kick out from his roof. He
should have done that long time ago. You--

Mary

Toby--

Toby

Well I won't say it, but I'll think it (cusses to himself)

Rev

Toby, did you do anything else besides what was just mentioned?

Toby

Yes sir.

Rev

What were they.

Toby

I put limburger cheese on the floor, so they could step in it.
Filled the place full of hop toads, and garter snakes, glued
all the songbooks together, and and O---

Deacon, Arabell and Bruce

Thats enough!

(thunder and wind off stage)

Mary

Listen! Listen, to that wind!

(stage darkens)

Deacon

A storm's coming up.

Arabella

I must get home I don't want to stay here while it storms.
(starts to door wind and thunder) Oh I can't go now.

Deacon

We'll have to stay here.

Toby

If you stay here, I'll turn my hop toads loose.
(the storm becomes louder)

Arabella

Oh this is terrible. I'm so afraid of storms.

Bruce

That lightening is awful close to the ground. Its the worst kind in the world. It zig zags and then jumps right down/

Deacon

Is there any chance of it hitting here.

Toby

How do you we know you fool?

(crash of thunder and shot fired in barrell of stage)

Bruce

Look it struck that tree in the front yard.

(scream off stage)

Deacon

My house is afire! (the whole stage goes clear black then the lights completly up, then down, horrible thunder thrash)

Arabella

Oh save me!

Deacon

Look at the sky it seems as if the ~~ra/h/~~ wrath of God were breaking out.

Arabella

It is the wrath of God

Rev

But if our hearts be free from sin, we need not fear.

Toby

Old Arabellas just about to shimmy out of her underwear. She's done something.

Bruce

My God, I can't stand this.

Deacon

Reverend, what can it be?

Rev

There is nothing to fear. If God wants to take us he will so why tremble.

Bruce

But I can't die now. I can't.

(Loud crash louder than any before stage clear bright then black then red)

Toby

Lightening hit the new church. (crash again) It's falling down.

(all look out window)

Bruce

My church! Its destroyed.

Rev

And why shouldn't it be? Your church was a mockery of God. What does such a palace mean to Him above if it will not give service to all. A church for the rich is not a church the Lord. Your gilded church of gilded gospel has fallen, as ~~as/h/~~
~~as/h/~~

Arabella

Oh Reverend pray for us, please won't you?

Toby

Do your own praying you old high hat.

Rev

I cannot stay the hand of the Almighty when his wrath has been

provoked. If you were free from sin, you would not fear.
Confess your ~~ways~~ sins and ask forgiveness.

(the storm has died down a little. Bruce is standing by window)

Bruce

The storm is nearly over. Why be a fool and confess. It only frightened us. (loud crah of thunder and lightening by window)

Toby

You better spill what you know about Mary, Bruce.

Rev

What do you mean, Toby.

Toby

Well, I aint gonna keep quiet no longer. (pointing to Bruce)
He is the father of her child!

All

You!

Toby

You don't dare deny it either.

Breue

Yes, yes, I'll admit it.

Rev

Bruce, do you mean you let that girl go through all of this without your taking any blame. We're youlow enough to do that?

Bruce

Yes.

Rev

(forgetting himself with emotion) Then I hope your are struck dead. I never wanted to kill in my life, but--(grabs Bruce by throat)

Arabeall

(scream) Wait/ I'll confess too. Don't kill him. ~~W/y~~

Rev

And why not?

Arabella

Because he is my son.

Deacon

Your son?

Arabella

Yes, when I went to college I met a man and fell madly in love with him. I was a little fool---he said he would marry me, I fell for his talk, before I knew it I was facing shame and disgrace. I couldn't come back to my folks with the baby, so arriving ~~late~~ on an early morning train, I carried the bundle with Bruce in it to your door step and placed it there. Bruce, is my son. (falls in chair sobbing)

Bruce

~~W/y~~ On God forgive me, I was drunk with the wine of success All I could see was gold and applause from the people. Mary, forgive me, and let me spend my life in making amends.

Mary

Bruce! (in his arms)

Deacon

So Bruce is your son?

Arabella

Yes, I knew I'd have to tell him someday. I couldn't die with that on my mind. (storm over, stage lighter) Why look the storm is over.

Rev

Yes, the clouds of lies and hypocigry have vanished with the reveleaing light of truth..

Toby

Well now that its all over, I want to say we just had one hell

